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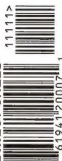
BATMAN

LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT

THE
PRIMAL
RIDDLE
Conclusion



DIRECT SALES



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HERE'S
THE SETUP:
THE NASTY WATER
HAS NOW SETTLED
AT THE LEVEL OF
RUBBER BUMPERS
WHICH RUN ALL
AROUND THE
ROOM.

ANY
FURTHER
TURBULENCE
WILL SEND WATER
OVER THE BUMPERS,
TO TOUCH THE
VOLTAGE IN THE
OPEN WIRES AND
FRY YOU.

YOU CAN'T
GO BACK
BECAUSE THE
DOOR'S NOW
BLOCKED.

YOU CAN'T
CLIMB A WALL
BECAUSE THEY'RE
ALL LIVE!

YOU CAN'T
CLIMB ONTO A
BUMPER BECAUSE
THEY'RE TOO
NARROW.

YOU CAN'T
SIT DOWN BECAUSE THE
WATER WOULD BE OVER
YOUR HEAD.

YOU CAN'T
DIG OUT THROUGH THE
FLOOR BECAUSE WE'RE ON
BEDROCK.

YOU CAN'T
RADIO FOR HELP BECAUSE
THE ELECTRIC FIELD BLOCKS
THE SIGNALS.

PRETTY
DAMN GOOD,
HUNK?

QUOTH THE
RIDDLER. YAMMER
MORE?

PRIMAL RIDDLE

Chapter three: A Dumpster of Chères

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Jnx_Scanz_HaCSA !!!

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IF I HADN'T LOST
MY "SOUL"—WHATEVER THAT
IS-- I WOULD NOT DESPAIR,
BECAUSE I SPENT MY LIFE
REFUSING TO DESPAIR.

BUT WITHOUT
A "SOUL," I CAN'T
DESPAIR, EVEN IF I
WANTED TO.



SO
I WON'T
DIE!

RIDDLER
DIDN'T FIND MY
EMERGENCY TOOL
KIT. GOOD.



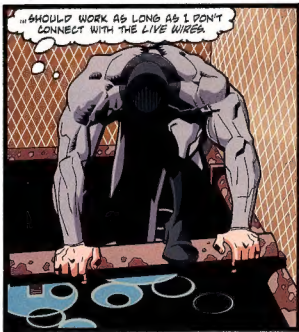
SLOWLY...
SLOWLY...

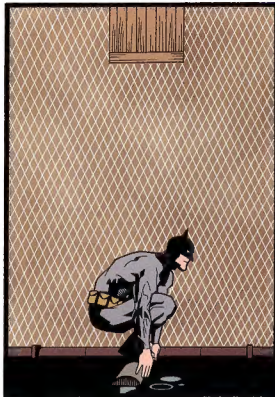


I AM LIMITED BY MY LOSS,
BUT NOW THE LIMITATIONS WORK
TO MY ADVANTAGE.



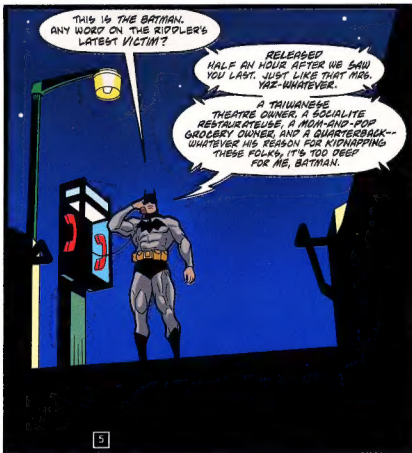
IT IS NATURAL
TO MOVE WITH DELIBERATE
SPEED.





CAN'T
TOUCH THE
WIRING.







THE RIDDLER'S CONSTRUCTION SITE
AT STAINLESS SIEVE--

I CAN! AND WHEN I
GET LOOSE, BOOBY, I'M
GOING TO CARVE YOU
INTO FAINTS!

NOW THAT'S THE BATMAN'S SPIRIT
TALKING--BUT SINCE IT'S TALKING THROUGH YOU,
CHEREE, IT DOESN'T WORRY ME A BIT.

THE SPIRIT'S LOSING STRENGTH,
THE LONGER IT TRIES TO SURVIVE WITHOUT
ITS NORMAL BODY, AND IT'S NOT
GETTING THAT BACK.

I DON'T
KNOW WHAT YOU'RE
TALKING ABOUT--

THEN I'LL TELL YOU. THE BATMAN DIED
WHEN I DROPPED HIM ONTO THAT POWER
GRID AND HIS SPIRIT STARTED OFF FOR THAT
GREAT GUANO-FIT IN THE SKY--BUT THE
MEDICS BROUGHT HIM BACK TO LIFE.

ONLY THE SPIRIT GOT LOST. IT'S BEEN
TRYING TO HANG ON EVER SINCE BY JUMPING
INTO OTHER BODIES, BUT THAT'S TAKING ITS
TOLL. I KNOW, BECAUSE I HAD IT IN ME FOR
A WHILE.

BUT NOW IT'S IN YOU, WHERE IT WILL STAY TILL
IT EXPIRES--WHICH IT WILL VERY SOON, NOW
THAT THE BATMAN'S DEAD FOR REAL. TILL
THEN YOU STAY ON ICE.

YOU'RE TOTALLY NUTS! THERE'S
NOTHING IN ME BUT HATE FOR YOU!
LET ME GO!

SEAL HER INSIDE
THAT PUMPKIN--WITH A FEW AIR
HOLES. I'LL HOLD UP ON CONSTRUCTION
TILL WE KNOW WE DON'T NEED
HER ANYMORE.

SORRY, CUTIE.
I KINDA LIKED YOU. BUT
LIKE THE DOG THAT LICKED
THE POTATO...

ALL NIGHT LONG, THE BATMAN
PROWLS THE CITY...

WITH THE WORD ON THE
STREET THAT HE DIED
LAST NIGHT, FOR THE
SECOND TIME, HIS
SILENT APPARITIONS
HAVE DOUBLED THEIR
USUAL EFFECT...

WHILE HE DOUBLES BACK ON THE
COMPANIES THAT MIGHT INCLUDE A
FRONT FOR HIS QUARRY...

NUTS
CANDIES
DAMAGGIC

I THINK THE BRASS IS ALL
AT SOME SALES CONFERENCE.
THERE'S REGULAR OPERATIONS
INSIDE, BUT THEY STOPPED
WORK OUT HERE TILL
THEY GET BACK.

BY THREE IN THE AFTERNOON,
HE'S RUN EVERYTHING TO
EARTH--AND FOUND
NOTHING.

I'VE LOST THE ABILITY
TO MAKE CONCEPTUAL
LEAPS, BUT I'VE FOLLOWED
EVERY EXISTING
LEAD.

I NEED
MY ABILITY
TO MAKE
CONCEPTUAL
LEAPS.

WAYNE
MANOR--

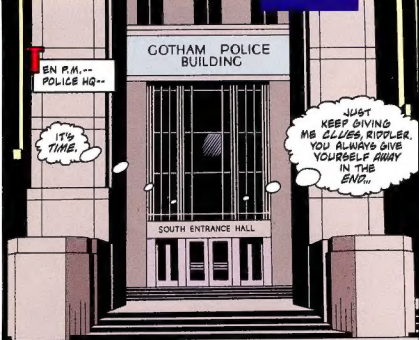
I'M GOING TO
SLEEP, ALFRED. BUT
THE RIDDLER SENDS
HIS RIDDLES EVERY
NIGHT AT TEN, SO
WAKE ME AT
NINE.

CERTAINLY,
SIR. I'LL GET THE
SALVE.

--AND MAY
I SAY, SIR, IT'S
A PLEASURE TO
SEE YOU
FUNCTIONING
AGAIN.

FUNCTIONING,
PERHAPS... BUT NOT ON
ALL CYLINDERS,
YET.

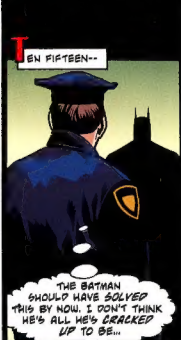




TEN P.M.--
POLICE HQ--

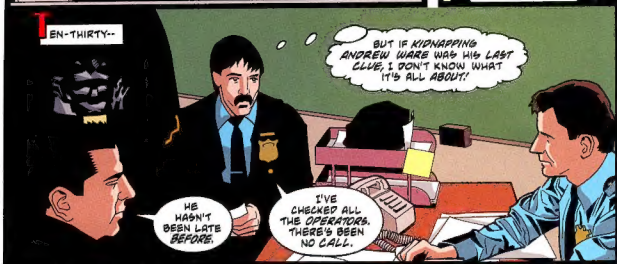
IT'S
TIME.

JUST
KEEP GIVING
ME CLUES, RIDDLER.
YOU ALWAYS GIVE
YOURSELF AWAY
IN THE
END...



TEN FIFTEEN--

THE BATMAN
SHOULD HAVE SOLVED
THIS BY NOW. I DON'T THINK
HE'S ALL HE'S CRACKED
UP TO BE...



TEN-THIRTY--

BUT IF KIDNAPPING
ANDREW WARE WAS HIS LAST
CLUE, I DON'T KNOW WHAT
IT'S ALL ABOUT!

HE
HASN'T
BEEN LATE
BEFORE.

I'VE
CHECKED ALL
THE OPERATORS.
THERE'S BEEN
NO CALL.



HEY, GUYS, WHAT'S
THE WORD? THE FIRST
EDITION ROLLS AT
MIDNIGHT.

GET OUT
OF HERE, DARRAS.
WE'LL LET YOU
KNOW.

WAIT--!

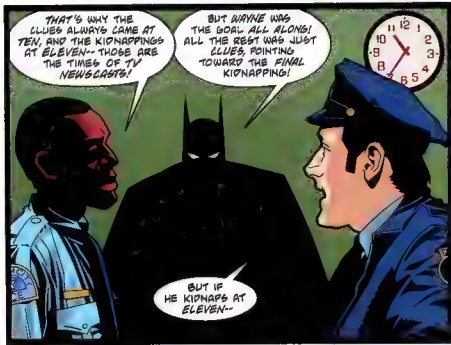
THE
REPORTER'S
HAT!

I
DON'T
HAVE A
HAT...



BUT THE RIDDLER
DID. THAT WAS HIS LAST
CLUE-- AND NOW I SEE IT
ALL! IT'S...

...LOGICAL!





I'LL
SEND A SQUAD
TO WAYNE
MANOR!

NO!

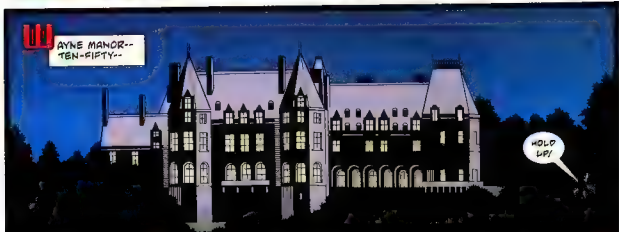
NO--THIS
IS PERSONAL
BUSINESS BETWEEN
THE RIDDLER AND ME!
I'LL GUARANTEE BRUCE
WAYNE'S SAFETY ON
MY OWN!



I'M
BEGINNING TO
FUNCTION WELL
WITHOUT MY "SOUL!"
IF I DON'T GET IT
BACK SOON,
IT--

--AND
I--

--WILL
BE LOST
FOREVER!



WAYNE MANOR--
TEN-FIFTY--

HOLD
UP!



WAYNE'S RIGHT!
THIS PLACE IS BETTER
PROTECTED THAN A
CASUAL OBSERVER
WOULD GUESS--

--BUT I'VE TAKEN
ALL OF THAT INTO
ACCOUNT.

LONG
BEFORE SPIRITS
GOT INTO THE
MIX, I WAS
STUDYING THIS
PLACE. THIS IS
THE ANSWER TO
MY PRIMAL
RIDDLE!

11



AND NOW, AS ONE
CARPENTER ASKED THE OTHER,
"HOUSE BUSINESS?"



BOSS... THE BATMAN AIN'T DEAD. HE WAS ON THE STREET...

AND?

AND HE AND WAYNE ARE FRIENDS...

USED TO BE! AND EVEN IF THE BATMAN DID SOLVE MY RIDDLE OF THE PIT, HE'S TOO BUSY FINDING HIS SOUL TO BOTHER US.



NOW BE VEUY, VEUY QUIET...



NO NEED FOR THAT, SIR! THE MASTER'S ALARMS HAVE SECONDARY SYSTEMS TO ALERT WHEN THE PRIMARIES ARE DISABLED!

PUT UP YOUR HANDS!



NAH! PUT YOURS DOWN, FOGEY!

WE'VE PRACTICED FOR THIS, TOO!



BUT
I'VE PRACTICED
ALL MY
LIFE!



I STILL
WANT WHAT
BELONGS TO ME,
RIDDLER.



THIS IS
WHAT YOU'LL GET, YOU...

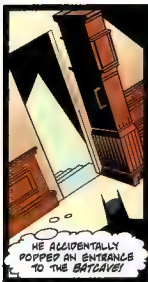
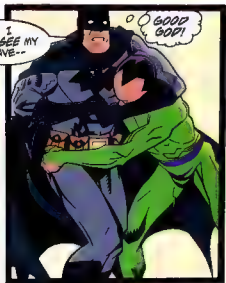


NO RIDDLES, RIDDLER!
NO LAUGHS!

YOU MAKE
UP THE GAMES! DON'T
COMPLAIN WHEN YOU
LOSE THEM!

WHY
AREN'T YOU
DIEING?

I'M THE
BATMAN! I WON'T DIE!



He can escape any trap.
Pick any lock.
Break any chain.
**But he can't
escape his
destiny.**

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**MISTER
MIRACLE**

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--I'M THE
CHARM!



LISTEN TO YOURSELF, BATMAN!
YOU'RE NOT A ROBOT ANY LONGER!
YOU'RE ADJUSTING TO THE LOSS
OF YOUR SPIRIT--WHICH MEANS
IT'S GONE FOR
GOOD!

IF NOT THIS TIME,
I'LL GET YOU SOME TIME BECAUSE
YOU'RE ONLY HALF A MAN!



ALFRED--

YES SIR!



HALF
A MAN,
AM I?



HALF A
BAT-MAN! IT'S
ENOUGH.

SCATTER!
THESE WOODS
WILL PROTECT
US THE WAY
THEY PROTECT
WAYNE!

HE
WON'T FIND US
IN THERE.



AAK!!



NO! NO!



GET AWAY FROM ME! LET ME
GAGG!!

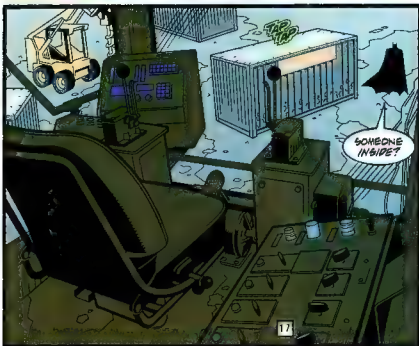
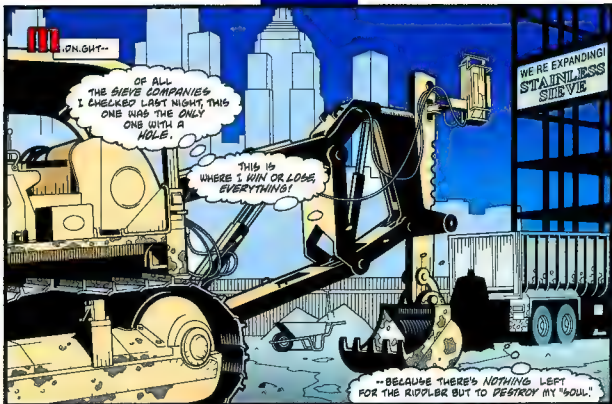


I HAVE HIS MEN--BUT THE RIDDLER'S GONE AGAIN. NO MATTER--I KNOW THE ANSWER TO HIS RIDDLE!

"HOW MANY CUBIC FEET OF DIRT ARE THERE IN A HOLE SIX FEET LONG, FOUR FEET WIDE, AND SIX FEET DEEP?"

"NONE. IT'S A HOLE."

AND I KNOW WHERE A HOLE'S TO BE FOUND...





MISS...
MISS... WHERE
ARE...



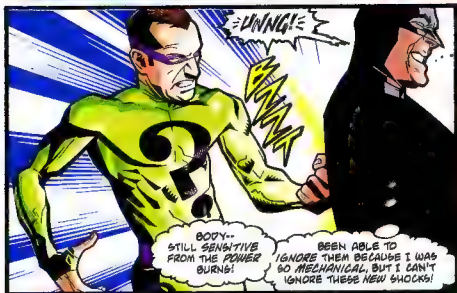
"WHAT DID
CINDERELLA SAY TO
THE PHOTOGRAPHER?"
"SOME DAY MY PRINTS
WILL COME!"

I'VE GONE
THROUGH HELL—AFTER I
KILLED YOU! BUT ELECTRICITY'S
STILL MY JOLT OF CHOICE, AND
THIS TIME I'M GOING TO
MAKE SURE!



"WHY DID
CUSTER CRAVE A
CREDIT CARD?"

"SO HE COULD
CHARGE!!!"



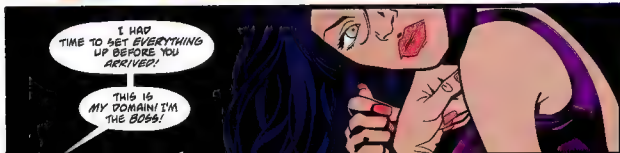
"UNNG!!!"

BODY--
STILL SENSITIVE
FROM THE POWER
BURNS!

BEEN ABLE TO
IGNORE THEM BECAUSE I WAS
SO MECHANICAL, BUT I CAN'T
IGNORE THESE NEW SHOCKS!



DON'T
HOPE FOR
ANY WAY
TO SHORT-
CIRCUIT
ME, BAT-
MAN!



I HAD
TIME TO SET EVERYTHING
UP BEFORE YOU
ARRIVED!

THIS IS
MY DOMAIN! I'M
THE BOSS!



Together
they will
triumph
over evil...

...If they can
learn to
trust each other.

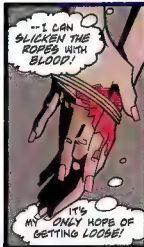
ELSEWORLD'S FINEST

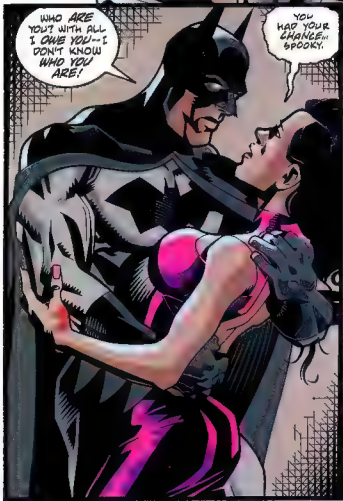
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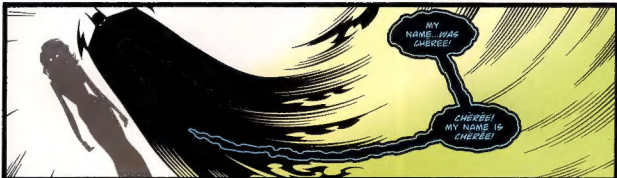




THERE
HE IS! GET
THAT LIGHT
ON HIM!



BATMAN! HEY,
BATMAN!



MY
NAME... WAS
CHEREE!

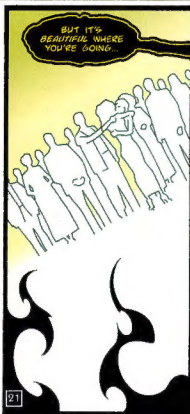
CHEREE!
MY NAME IS
CHEREE!



REMEMBER ME, BATMAN!
THIS ISN'T WHAT I WANTED
FOR MY LIFE...

I'D STOP
YOU IF I KNEW
HOW I'D DO
ANYTHING! BUT I
COULDN'T STOP
MYSELF!

IT'S NOT
ANYTHING I'VE
HAVE CONTROL
OVER!

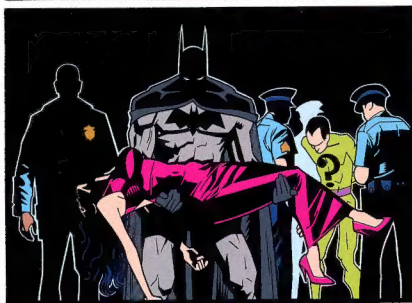


BUT IT'S
BEAUTIFUL WHERE
YOU'RE GOING...



...AND
SO UGLY DOWN
BELOW.

BUT SO
WELCOME TO ME
NOW.



PREVIOUSLY in LOTDK

In a desperate struggle, the Riddler nearly kills the Dark Knight. Though recovering quickly, the Dark Knight finds his crimefighting spirit seems to have left him. But others prove to have gained his drive for justice...

Dear LOTDK,

LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT

#102 was great! It's rare to see the Dark Knight caught off guard, but the Spook seems to be very good at what he does! Clearly, the Spook is one of the craftiest foes of Batman, even going so far as to use Batman's greatest weapon: fear.

James Robinson drops right into the action with the first murder occurring only a few pages into the story. The characters immediately begin to play off one another's suspicions. Even Bruce Wayne can't be certain what exactly is going on. Just like the players, we're kept a little in the dark about everything that's going on, but that just seems to make us empathize even more with the characters.

The Spook seems to be able to stay one step ahead of the Dark Knight. I really loved the last page, where a tiny Batman clings to the side of the mansion, thinking, "But there are no such things as ghosts." As the snow falls on the ground, you can almost feel the Dark Knight's uncertainty and doubt. Perhaps for the first time in his career, he truly feels that he is not only not in control of the situation, but he's not even sure of what to believe. Although he is one of the most resourceful characters in the DCU, even he, in the end, is just human after all.

Of course, I'm going to be waiting on pins and needles for the next installment of "Spook." This is why I love reading Batman.

CHRIS SPINDER
LOS ANGELES, CA

Thanks, Chris! You're absolutely right, the Spook is quite an engineer when it comes to devious plots! Of course, with the ending to the story, who knows if he'll ever come back? Let's see: no body, no identity—well, according to the supervillain handbook, that means he gets a "killed once, come back for free" pass.

And yes, the Dark Knight certainly had his hands full trying to keep the survivors' claws off one another. Their suspicious natures nearly got the better of them. But under such circumstances, I suppose none of us would be the most pleasant people in the world.



Dear LOTDK,

After reading LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT #100 and #101, I'm glad to see the return of the multiparter, especially a murder mystery! Don't get me wrong, the

origin of Dick Grayson as Robin and the futuristic Batman tale were both great, but I really love seeing the Batman in action!

What makes this story even more interesting is the emphasis on Bruce Wayne's business life. Though every issue of any Batman title is guaranteed to showcase the Dark Knight swinging from rooftop to rooftop, it's not often we get a glimpse into the business dealings of Bruce Wayne, the financial genius. His fellow entrepreneurs, David Gracy, Jason Maconi, Morris Baron, Cynthia Rutherford, and Benjamin Yates, all appear to be interesting. Unfortunately, poor Sam Vaughn expired before we got the chance to know him, but the others seem to be tied in to Wayne in some way or another that should prove interesting over the next few issues.

Darwin makes a promising henchman. Is he the one who's actually doing the murders, or is he merely some hired muscle? He certainly is able to give the Dark Knight a run for his money. What will happen if the Spook and Darwin double-team Batman? The Spook appears to be quite a formidable fighter in his own right, and Darwin may be stronger than the Batman himself.

So what is the Spook's motivation for killing all of these guests? It's certainly not some sort of revenge on the Dark Knight. There's some mention of a mysterious mission from a few years ago, but apparently not even the Spook is sure who "killed" him. Since this is a Batman title, and the Spook has need of a hired goon, I'm guessing he's human and not an actual ghost. Besides, he does appear to be solid and not an immaterial spirit.

Anyway, a good start to what promises to be a great mystery. I can't wait to see what happens next!

TODD CAGE
NEW YORK, NY

Well, yes, Todd. You see, this is how the finance game is actually played. You get together a bunch of wealthy people, start killing them off, and the survivor gets all the money! It's kind of like Monopoly, only really, really rough. And you don't want to know what happens when you land on Free Parking.

All kidding aside, you're right, we haven't seen much of Wayne's financial dealings. However, as mentioned earlier, he often doesn't have time to deal with the day-in and day-out rigors of free enterprise and super-heroics. So he picked the safer one, fighting crime!



Dear LOTDK,

Wow, ten little Indians, super-hero style, eh? So, the Batman is stuck in a mansion with a bunch of millionaires, all of whom are targeted for death. Pretty nasty.

For as long as I can remember, Batman

has always been known for his powers of observation and anticipation. In this case, however, the tables are turned. The Spook seems to know all about the various investors. He's really done his homework. He's calm, cool, and able to stay one step ahead of the Dark Knight.

Paul Johnson's art is beautiful. He's able to capture the power of Batman without making him an overly muscled Mr. Universe contender. His characters, while still definitely comic-book graphic, have a feeling of realism about them. Mr. Johnson captures the nuances in an expression which gives solidity to the figures, making them a little more real.

The Spook was also incredible. He was ethereal and airy, yet terrifying and harsh at the same time. Although I suspect he's human and not a super-powered villain, like the Batman, I'm not quite certain. The Spook definitely took delight in taunting the Dark Knight, even saying, "Here I am," patronizing the hero.

I'm curious to see whether my suspicions are correct. I believe that one of the guests in the mansion is the killer. However, that would make two of the most influential entrepreneurs on the face of the Earth in attendance highly skilled in subterfuge and martial arts. Hhhmm... Well, Bruce is one, so who's the other?

RICH TALSON
MONTGOMERY, AL

Paul Johnson did do an excellent job on LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT, didn't he? Glad to see you did like it.



Dear LOTDK,

When are we going to see more villains in here? When I say that, I mean characters like the Joker, the Mad Hatter, or Two-Face? These guys are the real Batman villains! The Spook was OK, but I'd just about give anything to see Talia really go all out against the Dark Knight!

Anyway, now that I have that out of my system, let me tell you that I really enjoyed LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT #102. The Batman's words were haunting: "It's the wind. Just the wind. And the snow is just

frozen water. That's what I tell myself."

You know what that means? Batman's scared! He's frightened not for himself, but the fact that his science may not provide all of the answers. He's afraid that there might be something out there that can't be explained by his cave laboratory. He's scared that he's come up against a foe that can't be batarang-ed into unconsciousness. And you know what? He's got good reason.

RON CASE
ADDRESS WITHHELD



Dear LOTDK,

I've always been a big fan of James Robinson, so when I read that he was doing an arc in LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT, I made sure to get a copy. James is adept at really fleshing out super-hero characters, especially in such masterpieces as THE GOLDEN AGE and STARMAN. So, for him to get a chance to ply his craft at Batman? I'm there!

Part one of "Spook" promises great things. Already, we see that Batman is not in the best of spots. He's hindered not only by the blitzkrieg attack from the Spook, but also by the fact that he must protect four headstrong people, wealthy individuals who probably are more used to giving orders, not taking them. He definitely has his work cut out for him!

The artwork was terrific. The shot of Batman on page ten, panel one, where he's racing forward to save Gracy, is amazing. The way the color subtly streaks off his cape looks amazing. And the shadows, though appearing to be randomly placed, create the feel that the darkness is creeping up on the Dark Knight.

Batman's battle with Darwin was also pretty cool. It's not often you see the Dark Knight manhandled like that. For a minute there, I really thought he was going to beat Batman! Thankfully, the Batman triumphs in the end. The Spook, however, really surprised me! Not only was he able to keep the hero off-balance, but the Spook manipulated him into nearly killing himself. Wow, when was the last time you ever saw that from the Dark Knight?

So who did the killing? Well, all five people were in the room when Sam Vaughn died. And, presumably,

David Gracy is talking to the real Spook at the same time. So, it's doubtful that anyone at the gathering did the killing. With all the servants dead as well, that probably means that the killer did not infiltrate the wait staff. Whoever the Spook is, I don't believe we've seen him before.

Anyway, thanks for a great issue. The next two are going to be simply incredible.

JEREMY STEVENSON
DETROIT, MI

Jeremy, you were right, it wasn't any of the survivors. If you want to see another James Robinson tale in a different vein, keep your eye out for the 80-Page GREEN LANTERN GIANT coming out soon. His story features Alan Scott and his relationship with the Harlequin.

—Chuck Kim



NEXT ISSUE:



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